



United States Air Force

# ONLINE news

Vol. 1, No. 16

The official USAF newspaper (<http://www.af.mil/newspaper>)

June 30, 1999

## Inside

- Letters to the editor 2
- Y2K on track 2
- Recruiting may shortfall 3
- U.S., Russia extend program 4

## NEWSBYTES

### President announces nomination intent

The President announced his intention to nominate Carol DiBattiste to serve as the Under Secretary of the Air Force.

Mrs. DiBattiste, of Miami, has been Deputy United States Attorney, Southern District of Florida since January 1998. Prior to rejoining the United States Attorney's office in Miami, Ms. DiBattiste served as the first woman to be Director of the Executive Office for United States Attorneys.

The Under Secretary of the Air Force is the second ranking civilian in the Department of the Air Force. In addition to acting in the secretary's absence, the Under Secretary of the Air Force is in effect the Chief Operating Officer for the Department of the Air Force.

### Board results out July 1

The Air Force plans to release the listing of the service's newest line lieutenant colonels and the results of several non-line officer promotion boards July 1 (also July 1 for units across the International Date Line).

Selectees were chosen from these boards that convened at the Air Force Personnel Center April 19: Lieutenant Colonel's Line, Chaplain, Judge Advocate, Medical Science Corps, Biomedical Sciences Corps and Nurse Corps.

The list of those promoted is releasable at 1400 Zulu at bases across the Air Force. The complete list of those selected for promotion Air Force-wide will be available on the AFPC home page at <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil> at 1200 CST July 1.

### Online voting test

The Defense Department and five states have begun a pilot project for the 2000 presidential election that will allow service members to cast absentee ballots over the Internet instead of through the mail.

The five states involved are Florida, Missouri, Texas, South Carolina and Utah.

## Pilot bonus legislation nears completion



Photo by Staff Sgt. Steven Pearsall

*Capt. David Sundluf of the 524th Fighter Squadron, Cannon Air Force Base, N.M., goes through his pre-flight checklist before his first mission of Exercise Roving Sands '99.*

**WASHINGTON** – Congress is considering expanding the aviator bonus authority through 25 years of aviation service.

Senior Air Force leaders weighed this development when they convened June 14-17 at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. At their Corona meeting they discussed major issues such as operations in Kosovo, implementation of the expeditionary aerospace force, spare parts, rated management and aviator continuation pay.

Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel Lt. Gen. Donald Peterson updated plans to expand aviator continuation pay under existing law as well as in anticipation of enactment of the Fiscal Year 2000 Na-

**continued on Page 3**

## Exhibit honors fallen airmen

**By Airman Marti Diehl and Ivory Patton**

*Air University Public Affairs*

**MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Ala.** –

Three years after a deadly truck bomb attack in the Middle East, an exhibit has opened to serve as a constant reminder that terrorism can happen any time and any where.

The 19 airmen killed in the Khobar Towers terrorist bombing at King Abdul Aziz Air Base, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, were remembered June 25 in an Enlisted Heritage Hall ceremony at the Maxwell Air Force Base Gunter Annex.

This was the third anniversary of the bombing. The ceremony marked the opening of the new Khobar Towers Memorial exhibit that displays artifacts recovered from the bomb-

**continued on Page 3**



*Kathleen Wood, mother of deceased Airman 1st Class Justin Wood, views the Khobar Towers Memorial exhibit at the Enlisted Heritage Hall, Maxwell Air Force Base Gunter Annex. A1C Wood's parents participated in the exhibit's dedication ceremony June 25.*



## Letters to the editor

U.S. Air Force Online News publishes letters based on their appeal to an Air Force-wide audience each week. Send your letter to the U.S. Air Force Online News staff by completing the online form at

<http://www.af.mil/newspaper/>

Due to the number of letters, not all letters can be published. Letters may be edited for grammar and length. Only letters accompanied by a valid name and email address will be considered.

## Asking for trouble

In response to the article on software available so commanders can "monitor" credit card abuse (ONLINE NEWS, June 23) ... What do you expect when you give an 18-year-old who just left home a credit card? You set them up for trouble. Let people buy whatever they want to buy on the darn thing, pay them their per diem they've got coming and let them worry about the rest of the bill. ... If 18-year-olds can buy a brand new car and be responsible to pay for it ... they can handle a credit card.

**Christopher A. Judd**  
*Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio*

## Speak up!

Active-duty and retired members must take a stand on restoring retired military health benefits. ... These health benefits have been eroded due to lack of funds. ... Write and express your feelings to your senators and congressperson.

**Maj. Art Scheffler**  
*Retired*

## Proud American

... For the young people who feel Stop-Loss has disrupted their lives, it is a walk in the park. Ten to 20 years from now, they will look back and laugh when they tell their children or grandchildren. ... I want to stand up and be counted. In the words of Lee Greenwood, I am proud to be an American.

**Richard B. "Dick" Feiro**  
*Travis AFB, Calif.*

## Right to complain

Some people do have a right to complain [about Stop-Loss]. If you have a good job lined up only to have the Air Force tell you that you can't leave, you are going to feel cheated. ... I don't call that whining. I'd say that is a legitimate complaint!

**Staff Sgt. Ed Sutton**  
*Hurlburt Field, Fla.*

## Stop name calling

... let's stop the name calling. Everyone has the right to express their opinions, good or bad.

**Wes Barnhart**  
*Eglin AFB, Fla.*

# Y2K preparations still on track

W

**By Brig. Gen.**  
**Gary A. Ambrose**

With only six months remaining until Jan. 1, 2000, the Air Force continues to make excellent progress in its Year 2000—or Y2K—preparations. Y2K is an operational problem, and we're attacking the problem on four fronts: system compliance, installation certification, integration testing and consequence management.

Systems are under control — 96 percent of our mission-critical weapon and automated information systems are Y2K-compliant. Overall, about 93 percent of all Air Force systems are now certified. For those not yet ready, we know what they are and when they will be done, and we're watching them closely.

On the installation side, 95 percent of mission-critical infrastructure items are Y2K-compliant. All of our installation commanders have certified their bases are Y2K-ready from the perspectives of utilities, fire safety and security. Wing commanders are now performing "end-of-runway checks" — assessments of the ability of each of their groups to perform its critical mission in a Y2K environment.

They are also testing their continuity of operations plans, or COOPs. On May 11-12, Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., was the site of a "wall-to-wall," basewide test that looked at the Y2K performance of infrastructure items; communications networks; and logistics, personnel, medical, finance, civil engineering and security systems.

During the test, more than 7,500 clocks on dozens of automated systems and infrastructure items were rolled forward through four crucial dates: Sep. 8-9, 1999; Sep. 30-Oct. 1, 1999; Dec. 31-Jan. 1, 2000; and Feb. 28-29, 2000. Only a few anomalies occurred, notably some involving Y2K-certified, commercial off-the-shelf software. None of the anomalies produced mission-stopping effects.

Each time we "roll the clocks" we learn something new. For that reason, we urge every installation commander to conduct live-base Y2K testing. As a minimum, you should test systems that control utilities, fire safety and security. Also, a look at any unique software might save you some trouble down the road.

Current Y2K efforts focus on system evaluation in mission scenarios. All systems were individually tested as part of their compliance certification. We are now assessing systems of systems.

Much of the time remaining until Jan. 1 will be devoted to consequence management. Despite all of the efforts spent in certifying and testing systems and installations, we won't be 100 percent sure of finding and fixing all potential problems. So, we must be prepared to operate if computers fail.

Contingency plans and mission continuity of operations plans will ensure the mission continues if such failures occur. Mission-critical system "owners" completed their systems' contingency plans by Dec. 31, 1998. The deadline for all Air Force installations to have COOPs in place and tested is June 30.

Preliminary results highlight the need for commanders at all levels to assess the risk impacts of the most likely Y2K failures. COOPs must have the proper resources to be executable. Now — not Dec. 31 — is the time to take action if manual workarounds require additional manpower, training or supplies.

Some Y2K failures are likely to occur, but we do not anticipate catastrophic failures. The job will get done; our people will be paid; our families will be cared for; and our bases will be safe and secure.

Finally, we're confident that the Air Force will be able to perform its mission anywhere in the world on Jan. 1, 2000, and beyond.

*Editor's note: General Ambrose directs the Air Force Year 2000 Office at the Pentagon.*



# Pilot bonus legislation nears completion

continued from Page 1

tional Defense Authorization Act.

Under current law, the Air Force will raise the maximum amount for an agreement from \$22,000 to \$25,000, the full extent of the law. General Peterson said, "By expanding to \$25,000, we are doing everything within the law to retain this critically manned resource."

If the defense bill passes with this change, the Air Force plans to expand the bonus beyond the current limit of 14 years of commissioned service to 20 years, possibly to 25 years, General Peterson said. The pro-



Photo by Master Sgt. Val Gempis

*Capt. John Silance, an F-15 pilot from the 12th Fighter Squadron, Kadena Air Base, Japan, and Capt. Sabrou Kumagai, an F-15 pilot from Hyakuri AB, Japan, discuss air-to-air tactics after returning from a mission during Exercise Cope North '99.*

posed legislation, he explained, would give the Air Force flexibility to implement a restructured program. This will counter the increasing separation rate of pilots after their 14<sup>th</sup> year and preserve the operational readiness of the Air Force.

Recently, the Air Force has seen an increase in the number of pilots accepting agreements to remain on active duty. Currently, 42 percent of the aviators eligible

for bonuses this year have signed agreements.

"Over the past two years, we implemented 18 major retention initiatives," General Peterson said. "Restructuring aviator compensation was just one of those. Those 18 initiatives are beginning to pay off, but we must now address the increased post-14-year separation rate."

The general reiterated the Air Force's intention to allow this year's pilots to roll over to the new bonus program on their next anniversary if the legislation is passed. "In order to maximize their benefits, pilots currently eligible for the bonus should continue to sign up on time and not delay their decision," he said.

Shortly after the House and Senate come to an agreement, senior Air Force leaders will announce next year's program.

## Recruiting: Goals may fall short

By Tech Sgt. John Hancock

Air Force Recruiting Service Public Affairs

**RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas** — With the end of the fiscal year less than three months away, officials at Air Force Recruiting Service project that, for the first time since 1979, recruiters will fall short of their target.

For fiscal year 1999, recruiters were challenged to sign up 33,800 men and women to join the 350,000-plus people already wearing the Air Force uniform. Early estimates, according to recruiting officials, show they'll be about 2,500 shy of that number.

Reasons for missing the goal vary among the Air Force's leaders, but low retention rates are contributing factors.

"There are a lot of other opportunities in today's job market. Competition is tough," Acting Secretary of the Air Force Whit Peters told recruiters during a recent visit. "Hopefully, working the retention side of the problem will help reduce the number of people recruiters need to bring in."

If the competition is tough for applicants, it's also tough attracting new recruiters — a top priority at AFRS. Brig. Gen. Peter Sutton, AFRS commander, believes that with more recruiters his team can make its target numbers.

"We're still meeting our applicant quality goals, and we won't lower our standards to make goal," he said. "The answer is to have more recruiters and to penetrate markets we may be missing."

*This article is available in its entirety online.*

## Exhibit honors fallen airmen

continued from Page 1



*Kathleen Wood, left, and Cathy Adams, mothers of deceased Airman 1st Class Justin Wood and Capt. Chris Adams, view the Khobar Towers Memorial.*

ing and uniforms worn by three airmen killed in the blast.

Enlarged photographs taken in the aftermath of the explosion serve as a backdrop for the exhibit.

"By showing the bombed-out building in detail, the museum folks hope to impress upon people exactly how destructive the explosion was," said 1st Lt. John Redfield, Air University public affairs.

Acting Secretary of the Air Force Whit Peters spoke at the memorial dedication. In his address to the friends and families of the victims, he said, "Your brave young men served their country with distinction and are memorialized here, not only to honor them for their own sakes, but also to inspire future generations of Air Force men and women."

The idea for a memorial exhibit began in late 1996 when Senior Master Sgt. Richard Dittmer was a student at the Air Force Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy at Gunter. He and other classmates donated artifacts and money to help create the exhibit.

When friends and family viewed the exhibit at the dedication ceremony, they said they felt immense loss.

Capt. Leland "Tim" Haun was assigned to Patrick AFB, Fla., and was killed in the explosion while he was on temporary duty in Dhahran. Jenny Haun, his widow, said, "When you go to something like this, it hurts. But it helps heal the three-year emotional wounds that family members still bear."





# U.S., Russia extend Cooperative Threat Reduction Program

**Preventing proliferation and securing and dismantling weapons of mass destruction**

**WASHINGTON** — The United States and the Russian Federation signed a protocol, June 15 and 16, extending the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program through June 2006.

Through the CTR program the Department of Defense provides equipment, services and technical support to assist Russia and other newly independent states in preventing proliferation and securing and dismantling weapons of mass destruction.

This includes related materials and production facilities inherited from the former Soviet Union. Current projects under the CTR program include:

- Accelerating elimination of Russian missiles, bombers, submarines and land-based missile launchers to assist Russia in

meeting Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty requirements.

- Enhancing the safety, security, control and accounting of nuclear warheads in transport and at all of Russia's nuclear weapons storage sites.

- Ending Russia's production of weapons-grade plutonium.

- Constructing a facility for the storage of nuclear material for up to 12,500 dismantled nuclear warheads.

- Assisting Russia to implement the Chemical Weapons Convention by dismantling former chemical weapons production facilities and helping to destroy chemical weapons.

The extension allows Russia to eliminate an additional 349 missile silos, 1,429 land- and submarine-based strategic missiles and to dismantle about 30 strategic ballistic missile submarines with American support.



*The Peacekeeper missile is America's intercontinental ballistic missile. With the end of the Cold War, the U.S. has agreed to eliminate the multiple re-entry vehicle Peacekeeper ICBMs by the year 2003 as part of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty II.*

## Film: Vietnam through POWs' eyes



*Academy Award winner Tom Hanks attends the "Return With Honor" premiere. He also narrates the film.*

**By Staff Sgt. Kevin Ohlson**

**WASHINGTON** — "Return with Honor," a documentary about American prisoners of war in Vietnam, premiered to rave reviews in the nation's capital June 22, including those from politicians and former POWs themselves who attended.

The film tells the powerful story of U.S. pilots shot down during the Vietnam Conflict and of their horrific struggles to survive with honor as prisoners of war in North Vietnam, some for as long as eight and a half years.

Directed by Freida Lee Mock and Terry Sanders, "Return with Honor" tells the story of 462 American pilots and their grueling accounts though a wide range of previously un-

seen images and extensive archival video. It includes footage from the Vietnamese government and interviews with 25 American pilots and family members.

Narrator Tom Hanks said the film's authenticity sets it apart from previous Hollywood productions.

"It's something that actually happened that's as true as the fact we're here today," he said. "And it still has all the things to it. It's got love; it's got bravery; it's got hardship; and it's also got history behind it. Even though it's a non-fiction piece, it is to me one of the most enthralling, inspiring, enlightening pieces of film that you could ever see."

*This article is available in its entirety online.*



## U.S. Air Force ONLINE news

U.S. Air Force ONLINE news is produced each Wednesday by the Secretary of the Air Force Office of Public Affairs and is available via Air Force Link (<http://www.af.mil/newspaper>). This funded U.S. Air Force newspaper is an authorized publication for Air Force members and their families. Content is endorsed by the Department of the Air Force, but is not necessarily the views of or endorsed by the U.S. Government or Department of Defense. Editorial offices: SAF/PAI, 901 N. Stuart Suite 605, Arlington VA 22203. Telephone (703) 696-7832, Fax (703) 696-9162. Please post on unit bulletin boards and pass this copy on to others who need current Air Force news and information. Reproduce as needed.

### Publishers

Hon. F. Whitten Peters, *Acting Secretary of the Air Force*  
Gen. Michael E. Ryan, *Air Force Chief of Staff*

### Editor-in-Chief

Col. Ronald T. Rand, *Director of Public Affairs*

### Executive Editor

Col. Johnny Whitaker, *Deputy Director of Public Affairs*

### Managing Editor

Senior Master Sgt. Jim Katzaman

### Technical Production

Capt. Bryan Hubbard and Staff Sgt. Cheryl Toner